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SUBJECT Interview with Admiral Turner

DENNIS WHOLEY: In 1977 President Jimmy Carter called on our guest to head up United States intelligence. He told the President he'd rather have another job, but he did take on the assignment from 1977 to 1981. And he stepped into a minefield. He's here tonight to be with us, as the hostage situation in Lebanon becomes more complex. Our guest is Admiral Stansfield Turner, United States Navy (Retired). He's former Director of Central Intelligence. His new book, Secrecy and Democracy.

Good to have you here, Admiral.

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: Dennis, nice to be with you.

WHOLEY: What's the job of the director of the whole shooting match?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, there are two jobs that are given under the title Director of Central Intelligence. One is to coordinate all of the 12 intelligence agencies of our government. The other is to run one of those agencies, the CIA.

WHOLEY: When you say 12, I mean what are some of the other ones?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Defense Intelligence, something called the National Security Agency that collects electronic intelligence. The FBI has an intelligence section. So does the Treasury Department. So does the Energy Department. All small, but they're all parts of what we call tahe U.S. intelligence community.

Bringing them all together, as I described in the book,

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was not always easy.

WHOLEY: Is it manageable?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It is manageable, but I'd make some recommendations for making it more manageable.

You see, these organizations are semi-autonomous. They're proud. They're competitive. Sometimes the competition runs a little stronger than it should when you need more cooperation.

WHOLEY: When you talk about intelligence, what's the goal of intelligence?

ADMIRAL TURNER: To keep our policymakers, like the President, as well informed as possible of the trends of what's going on around the world. You like to inform them of specific actions ahead of time, like a revolution or an overturn of a government, one way or another. But more important, you want to let them know what the trends are over time.

You see, a President can anticipate what's going to happen if you tell him a year in advance that things are moving in this direction, and he can do something about it. If you tell him two weeks ahead of time such-and-such a government's going to be overthrown, there's not much he can do.

WHOLEY: Did the CIA miss the boat in Lebanon?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think so. You see, it's asking too much to predict every terrorist action, like before we've had in Lebanon, or at least the three that were there and the present one that's centered in Lebanon.

American intelligence should work hard to predict those by infiltrating terrorist organizations. But there are a lot of them. They pop up quickly. And they're very fanatic. It's not easy to do.

What I believe we need to do better is to encourage, pressure people like the Lebanese intelligence to do more to support us over there.

WHOLEY: But isn't that country in absolute chaos?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, it is. It is. There's no question about that. But nonetheless, the Lebanese government could put out networks of informants in Beirut to give us little clues here and there which we would help their intelligence sort out. Out of most of those clues would be nothing valuable. But

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we might get just what we needed out of the remaining few.

WHOLEY: President Carter was here not too long ago and he had a line in his book where he said that to tell all the players and all the different factions in Lebanon required some notations in a briefing book so he could keep them all straight.

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's true. There's something like 11 or 12 factions there, largely religious factions, all of whom have one degree or another of armament, one degree or another of military force.

WHOLEY: What do we know about this guy Nabih Berri that we now thought 24 hours ago was going to be a mediator in all of this, and now we have to negotiate with him?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, Nabih Berri is the hope -- he hopes to be the real leader of all the Shiite Moslems in Lebanon. They're one sect. They're one sect that has been rather neglected in the political process, and they're trying to establish themselves as a more potent political force. And Berri has great aspirations to be the head of that. But within his own Shiite community there are other subdivisions, there are other competitors with him.

WHOLEY: What do you think we should do? I mean you've been around the track. You've been in the military. You've directed intelligence. How do we respond in a situation like this?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, we've got to be patient. We can't let our tempers get too high. We are frustrated. It's very difficult to see a specific course of action. We feel very aggrieved, under the circumstances, and properly and understandably so.

But let's get back to the beginning of this crisis. You know, it started with Shiite terrorist actions against the Israeli Army occupying Southern Lebanon. In retaliation, the Israelis captured and put in jail in Israel a number of Shiites. In retaliation, the Shiites have captured our people to help put pressure on Israel. So it's a series of retaliatory terrorist actions. And we're caught as the fall guy here.

WHOLEY: Well, then I suppose you can go back before that and say: Should Israel have gone into Lebanon in the first place, huh?

ADMIRAL TURNER: You can go all the way back to Moses if you want.

WHOLEY: But you know, when we talk about intelligence,

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which is your area of expertise, do I find or do I think I see sometimes that Israel takes the United States by surprise?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, yes. You know, every country puts its own national interest number one. They're never going to subordinate themselves to somebody else, and certainly not Israel.

We now have this very difficult situation of will the Israelis exchange the prisoners, whom they've said they want to exchange, for the hostages, who happen to be Americans.

WHOLEY: Well, what do you feel about negotiating with people who take hostages? They are terrorists, right? How do you feel about that? What should we do?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, you know, what we should do is remain firm that we're not going to negotiate with the terrorists. But this is now an issue between Israel and the terrorists, as far as what the terrorists want. It's not ours, it's Israel's.

WHOLEY: But, you know, they say out loud -- and I'm sure that when you were around the White House, you were privy to this kind of stuff all the time. They say out loud that the United States will not ask Israel to release the prisoners because that will be negotiating with the terrorists. Yet at the same time, probably phone calls are going back and forth that are not being announced publicly on the steps of the White House by the news media, where this kind of call is being made. And we've got 50 people someplace in Lebanon, and we don't know where they are.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, there always are behind-the-scenes negotiations. I don't think it's helpful or useful for me to speculate on whether those negotiations are going on today.

WHOLEY: So your advice, if you were sitting in the job that you sat in a while back, to the President of the United States would be, "Be patient," huh?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think we as a country, as well as the President, have to be patient under these circumstances. And you know, you never can tell who is going to pop up to be the right intermediary, who's going to have the right chemistry here.

WHOLEY: How about Syria?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Syria doesn't want to be very helpful, it appears to me, at this time in this situation.

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WHOLEY: Where do you get that? I mean how do you come by that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I don't think Syria is interested in the program that we're trying to push to get Jordan, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Israel, ourselves, maybe Egypt together to try to solve what is one of the very basic problems here, and that is what to do about the Palestinians and their desire for some kind of autonomy on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the areas that Israel holds at this time and the Palestinians want to have control of.

WHOLEY: One person was killed, one young man has already been identified as killed. Let's say that the hostages, through some kind of negotiation -- there has to be negotiation, doesn't it? I mean that's the only way we're going to get them back.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I think we've passed the point where a military operation is feasible.

WHOLEY: Do you think it might have been a while back, when it first happened?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It's possible. Though in both Beirut and Algiers, where this plane stopped, I don't believe our force would have been welcomed, would have been permitted to come in.

Now, if we had gone in and tried to capture either of those airfields, as well as do something on the airplane, I think it would have probably been a catastrophe. That was too much to undertake, since there wasn't the element of surprise, like the Israelis had when they went in without permission to Entebbe, seized the airfield and got on the airplane. We didn't have that element of surprise here, so I don't think we could have done it without the agreement of the airport authorities. And we couldn't get that.

So, no, I don't think there really was an opportunity. But one never knows for sure.

WHOLEY: I read a quote of yours that appeared in USA Today today, and it suggested that you said that some kind of non-lethal military retaliation might be called for after the whole business is over. And we pray to God that it will be over, and be over soon. Non-lethal means no killing.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I hope the quote prefaced that by saying if we could clearly prove that Iran sponsored this action, fomented this action. Then I think we have to do something about retaliating against a country that supports a terrorist action like this against us.

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WHOLEY: Yeah, but what I want to do is take it a step further. Supposing we find out it's not Iran. Supposing it's another country. Should we still take some kind of non-lethal action?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, yes. Whether you can take the kind of non-lethal action I proposed against another country is a question. You see...

WHOLEY: Why could you do it against Iran and not another?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because we could mine all of the ports of Iran and interrupt their commerce, interrupt the flow of shipping in and out of their country. The mines are non-lethal in the sense that they don't kill anybody unless the Iranians try to run the blockade.

Now, another country may be landlocked and not have that vulnerability. We might have to look at some other form of retaliation, perhaps economic, perhaps political, other ways like cutting off all air transport into their country -- that is, all American airlines going in, and other things. I just would have to look at an individual case to see what might be possible.

WHOLEY: As we look back over this whole business of Lebanon, do you think we should have been there in the first place? I mean did we get ourselves involved in someplace that just has turned out to be a nightmare?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Absolutely.

WHOLEY: We should have been there, or we should not?

ADMIRAL TURNER: We should not have been there. We missed the ball.

WHOLEY: How so?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because we didn't understand the United States has only two vital interests in the Middle East: the continued integrity of Israel and the continued Free World access to the oil of the Persian Gulf. Now, Lebanon is peripheral to both of those. And when this Administration let itself get totally sucked in to its desire to solve the problem in Lebanon, it lost the bubble that these were are other interests, and they were neglected and have been neglected for the last four years.

WHOLEY: Do you think our involvement in Lebanon has hurt us with all of the Arab countries of the Middle East?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes. But, you know, the Arab World

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does understand that we have to be a major player in solving the problem of Israel and the Arab World. And we've got to now, after this crisis has passed us, recall that we've got to get back to solving that fundamental problem. It won't dispense with the threat of terrorism against Americans entirely. But I think it's only -- I think it's one of the only ways we can hope to reduce this threat, is to solve, as much as we can, the basic problem of the Palestinian issue.

WHOLEY: Some Americans are so frustrated that we are so continually humiliated by these terrorists, they say that after this whole thing is over, that maybe we should have some kind of a raid on areas that contain the Shiite Moslems. How does that sit with you?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, it seems to me that that will continue the cycle of action and reaction, and we'll have another terrorist attack on Americans somewhere else.

If we can identify the hostage-takers and get them specifically, that's one thing. But I have never seen intelligence that good that we could pinpoint the individuals and then hope to isolate them, so if you struck at them you wouldn't kill a whole lot of innocent bystanders.

WHOLEY: Is that the fault of intelligence, or is that just the way it works? It's just too hard.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think it's just too hard in these circumstances, particularly, to hope that you would find them in an isolated situation.

Now, there are things that we can do, I think, to protect ourselves better in the future, but never a hundred percent. I've been suggesting today, Dennis, that we go to the United Nations and ask to create something called an International Airport Inspection Authority. And inspectors would go around the world and check the security precautions at airports. If they find a country is too slack, all the members of this agency will prevent their own airlines from flying into that country until the situation is cured.

That's a pretty big lever on a lot of countries. I think we could make that work.

I think we may have to go back to sky marshals on U.S. airplanes. Only this time, instead of being in this country, on U.S. airlines overseas.

I think we've got to get the world more interested in curbing this problem. Not only for us, but for all people.

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WHOLEY: Let me ask the folks at home to jump into the conversation....

In this whole overview that we've had and conversation we've had about terrorists, Lebanon, and the United States involvement there, where specifically has our intelligence worked for us, and where has it fallen down absolutely miserably?

ADMIRAL TURNER: In respect to this Lebanon situation, this hostage situation?

WHOLEY: Yeah.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think it's fallen down miserably anywhere. And you and I don't know where it's worked for us.

I saw it work for us with several terrorist groups where we infiltrated them. And when they went to perpetrate a terrorist action, we were able to make it fizzle rather than kill. When the CIA is inside a terrorist group, you and I will probably know, and shouldn't. They may have some strings into the Shiite community today that at least they're giving our negotiators, our people a sense of who these people are, what they're like, what their motives are. I've seen that happen too, where we couldn't stop an action, but we at least had some inside information about the group perpetrating the action.

WHOLEY: I just want to go back and cover one thing. Should we ask Israel out loud to release the prisoners?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think the President will. And again, I don't think we ought to speculate too much on what he will do.

WHOLEY: When you look at intelligence all over the place, you know, the United States, you have been highly critical of the Reagan Administration, have you not?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I've been only critical of the fact that they have revived public criticism and skepticism about the CIA. And that hurt the CIA very, very badly just a decade ago right now. And if there is a repetition of that, you could be in very serious trouble in the CIA in the future.

So I hope that whatever they're doing, they can change the tenor of public reaction to it.

WHOLEY: Can you be a little bit more specific, give me a couple of examples?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Sure. The mining of the Nicaraguan

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harbors was so unpopular, the President called it off. The assassination manual in Nicaragua was so unpopular, the same thing happened. There was criticism that they're politicizing the intelligence products. Several analysts quit the CIA.

Now, I don't know whether the accusations in these cases are true or not. But as I'm saying, Dennis, it's less important to me whether they are true than whether the Congress and the people of the country believe it. Because if they do, the Congress will pass laws that may tighten the noose on the CIA to the point it can't do good intelligence. And you and I, if we criticize the CIA and feel skeptical about it, would drive those professionals back into the mood I saw them in in 1977. They were hunkering down, not taking any risks, for fear of getting into more trouble.

WHOLEY: When you took over, the place was a mess, wasn't it?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I think that's a little bit strong. But there was virtually no covert action going on, things like what we're doing today in Nicaragua.

WHOLEY: That's overt.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, it's an overt covert action. It's technically a covert action, by law.

WHOLEY: Should we be down there trying to overthrow the Sandinista government? Should the CIA be involved in trying to overthrow the government of another country?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think there are cases where the CIA should be employed to do that. This one is not one.

WHOLEY: Why? Why not?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, first, because we've not, as you've just pointed out, been able to keep it covert.

Secondly, because there's no prospect, that I've heard anybody say, that it's going to succeed. It's a dead-end policy.

And lastly...

WHOLEY: What's moral there, though? What's moral? Not whether it's going to succed or fail, what's moral?

ADMIRAL TURNER: What's wrong about this program is that it has stooped below the ethical standards that the United States public want us to do. The mining of the harbors was really a

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terrorist action.

WHOLEY: Spies can't get involved nowadays in dirty games, can they?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Of course they can.

WHOLEY: They can?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Of course they can.

WHOLEY: Should they?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Sure they should.

WHOLEY: Oh, they should?

ADMIRAL TURNER: When it's in the interests of our country.

WHOLEY: So you're saying...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Protecting the interests of this country is a moral imperative for our government.

WHOLEY: Let's back up, because you and I like to back up the clock a little bit. If United States citizens did not know as much as they know about what's going on in Nicaragua and the covert effort to overthrow the Nicaraguan government was still covert, do you think that they should press ahead?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think there are two other provisons that have to be met. One, is it really going to be successful? And two...

WHOLEY: But what's moral, Admiral? What's moral? Is it right for the United States Government to try to overthrow another government? That's the question.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes. It's perfectly moral.

WHOLEY: It is?

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's perfectly moral.

WHOLEY: Under what circumstances?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Under the circumstances that we consider it very important to our national security. I mean that's the definition by law. The Congress...

WHOLEY: Do you think Nicaragua and the Sandinistas are

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important to our national security?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think so. No.

WHOLEY: You don't think so.

ADMIRAL TURNER: So I wouldn't pass it. But I'm saying it's not immoral for the government to have decided it was important to the national security. And the President did decide that. I disagree with him, but that's a matter of judgment, not a matter of fact.

And if you meet that standard of important to the national security, if you meet the standard that it's likely to succeed and that you can keep it covert, then I think it's worth doing.

WHOLEY: Let me get the folks at home involved in the conversation....

JIM: My name is Jim. I'm calling from Springfield, Illinois.

There were a lot of criticisms during the campaign, the Reagan-Carter campaign, about Carter's Administration's handling of the hostage crisis in Iran. Now that the Reagan Administration is in charge and there apparently is another hostage crisis, I'd like to hear Mr. Turner's comments on how these two compare and whether you think the Reagan Administration's talk during the campaign can be followed through with now...

WHOLEY: We got the drift of the question.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Jim, that's a good question. And there are a lot of similarities because we are, as a country, in the same frustrating position of having very few options that we can undertake.

Mr. Reagan, I think, was extreme in his criticism. He was extreme when he took office and said, "Terrorists beware." And all the talk since then about going out and striking back and retaliating has not been followed through.

So I think he's got a little bit of reality coming to him right now.

WHOLEY: Did you miss the boat in Iran?

ADMIRAL TURNER: We missed the boat in predicting the actual fall of the Shah. We did not miss the boat in predicting

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that he was in a lot of trouble. President Carter pulled him aside in his own office a year ahead of time and warned him he was in trouble.

But I made a bad assumption, and I take responsibility for it. I assumed that the Shah, although he was in trouble, would pull out the army and keep himself in power. He could have done that. He didn't do it. Maybe he was so out of touch, he didn't realize what deep trouble he was in. Maybe, Dennis, his doctors had told him he was dying -- we know that had happened -- and he just couldn't face a tough decision. I don't know.

WHOLEY: Did you folks see Khomeini as emerging as so powerful?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No. I don't think we anticipated that, because Khomeini had one bloc of power; and what happened was that he was able to pull behind him other blocs of power: the merchants who were unhappy with the economic situation, people who'd been educated in the West and wanted some participation in the political process. And we saw these as separate groups of dissension. But we didn't understand the charisma of Khomeini in bringing them all together into a critical mass.

WHOLEY: Do I then assume that it'snot the job of intelligence -- I thought you said the job of intelligence was to present the President with certain facts so he can predict the course of events.

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's correct. And what I'm trying to say to you is that we did let the President know there was a trend downward for the Shah. We did not predict that the trend was going to drop off and he was going to fall off the cliff, he was going to lose his throne at the time he did.

WHOLEY: Okay. I've got to ask the hard question. Is that bad intelligence?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It's not the best intelligence. But getting the trends is the most important part of it. I'm certainly not trying to say we did the best job we could have in Iran. We could have done better.

WHOLEY: You're on Latenight America.

BILL: This is Bill from Detroit.

I'd like to ask Admiral Turner just a couple of questions and then get his comment....

Having to do with the no-hostage policy, which has

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essentially three parts. First of all, you consider the hostages to be dead. Secondly, you do not negotiate. Third, you retaliate if possible. This seemed to, in the past Israeli experience, to have diminished the taking of hostages because there was nothing to be gained by the hostage-takers.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think that has been the Israeli policy. And to the extent it has, I don't think it's worked. The Israelis have negotiated. Just a few weeks ago they traded over a thousand of their prisoners for three Israelis. They've done it before, also.

But I don't believe the Israeli policy of retaliation can be shown to have stopped terrorist acts by the Muslims against Israel.

WHOLEY: Do you think the Israeli intelligence is terrific?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No. It's good. It's good particularly in its own zone, but it's very limited in the region it can cover. It's nothing like the worldwide coverage of American intellgience.

WHOLEY: Is the United States the best in the world?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Absolutely.

WHOLEY: No question.

ADMIRAL TURNER: No question in my mind.

WHOLEY: How do we stack up with the Soviets, on a scale of zero to ten? If we're ten, where are they?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, about eight.

WHOLEY: So they're pretty good.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, they're very good. No question about that. But we have so much more sophisticated technical systems. And, Dennis, we have the freedom in this country for our interpreters of the data to come up with whatever conclusions they want. You can't have that in the Soviet Union.

WHOLEY: You mean they've got to come up with a foregone conclusion?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, they can't deviate too far from Marxist doctrine. They can't deviate too far from Communist Party policy.

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WHOLEY: You're on Latenight America.

JACK: This is Jack from Topeka, Kansas.

Admiral Turner, why do we not seem to see more Soviet nationals or diplomats involved as victims in terrorist kidnappings such as that we see in Lebanon today?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think that's because we are viewed as more vulnerable. We are viewed as more the problem behind the situation in the Middle East, in particular, because of our friendship with Israel. We just are a more vulnerable target, I'm afraid.

WHOLEY: You're on Latenight America.

BILL: This is Bill from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

I'd just like to ask the Admiral why he feels that the United States has the right to go in and shape foreign policy to our national liking when it is very bad for the people of the country where we're interfering?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, Bill, I wouldn't think that the United States Government would decide that it was really in our best interest if it was all that bad for the other country, unless there was just some terrible situation in that country, like a Hitler or an Idi Amin or something like that. But even there, I find it hard to think we would feel that getting rid of an Idi Amin would be bad for the country.

No, I don't believe we should be indifferent to the welfare of other peoples. But the welfare of the United States comes first. And if it's truly important for us to change a government in another country, we've got to do it.

But again, I really don't think there are going to be many opportunities to do that. We've only done it a couple of times in history, and those were very unique circumstances.

WHOLEY: You're on Latenight America.

KEITH: My name is Keith from New Jersey.

My question is, you know, is there Israeli spying on this country, as far as technology goes? And I'm referring to how, in your mind, does 200 pounds of plutonium be stolen from this country, wind up in Israel, and the krytrons? And what kind of holocaust are we doing that we just nonchalantly and nobody seems to care about such a serious thing, like it's fine?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, we certainly are not cavalier

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about losing the plutonium that you have mentioned. We haven't pinned it on anybody very specifically, very conclusively.

Now, lots of countries spy on lots of countries. Some of our friends spy on us. We caught some of them doing it in our time. I think it would be indiscreet for me to talk about specific instances because those are still classified.

WHOLEY: You know this Walker family -- you're a Navy man, right? -- Walker family spy business and passing along our secrets to the Soviets. Caspar Weinberger said the other day if they are convicted, they should be shot. Do you agree?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I think they should be given a more strict punishment than something that will let them be paroled in ten years, which is a thing that bothers me very much about our country. I'd like to see at least a life sentence for them. And I certainly wouldn't be opposed to their being shot.

WHOLEY: You wouldn't be opposed to their being shot.

ADMIRAL TURNER: No. Not particularly the two senior Walkers, who served their whole career in the United States military, who really knew what they were doing, who really were very well aware of the dangers to our country of an inadequate national security. I think they're really traitors.

WHOLEY: Have we ever shot anybody?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I can't answer that for sure because it's only been in wartime, and I'm not sure whether there've been traitors caught in wartime. I suspect there have, but I can't be sure, Dennis.

WHOLEY: How do you tighten up -- and we've got a country of, what, 235 million people, and we get so many people who work for the armed services and so many people who work for the Defense Department, the Pentagon, a lot of secret clearances.

ADMIRAL TURNER: About 4.3 million people with clearances for classified information. It is far too many. And when Mr. Weinberger says he's going to cut his allocation by ten percent, I think he's got to be kidding us. That isn't meaningful.

WHOLEY: What would you say, 50?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I think between 30 and 50. I cut 30 percent out of all defense contractors dealing with the CIA when I was in office, and none of them complained. They all acknowledged they had 30 percent too much.

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Now, on top of that, we've got to cut down the amount of classified information. It's ridiculous. You read things in top secret documents that are on the TV tube or in the newspapers every day. And people don't respect the top secret, secret labels that we put on documents. And therefore they leak out.

WHOLEY: Well, interestingly enough, with your own book, you had to submit this to the CIA for a rule or a law, or whatever, you put into effect yourself.

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, that's not true.

WHOLEY: Well, then correct me. I can be wrong.

ADMIRAL TURNER: The rule was put into effect when the CIA went into business.

WHOLEY: Didn't you support this business with Frank Snepp?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I support still the idea that employees, former employees of the CIA should submit their writings for a check on whether they've inadvertently put some secrets in it.

Now, I prosecuted Snepp not because he released secrets; because he did not submit his book for clearance, in accordance with his contract.

WHOLEY: You submitted...

ADMIRAL TURNER: My problem was I submitted mine and it was treated very arbitrarily.

WHOLEY: A hundred deletions? A hundred changes?

ADMIRAL TURNER: At least. Yes.

WHOLEY: Did it make you angry? You used to run that place.

ADMIRAL TURNER: It took me ten percent of the time that I spent writing that book just trying to get clearance from it. That's very expensive.

WHOLEY: What do you think of the new Director?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, the new Director may or may not be doing a very good job. But you and I will never really know.

But I go back to what we talked about earlier. The new

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Director and the President of the United States have brought the CIA back into ill repute in the media of this country. And whether they deserve that or not, they'd better do something about it before it hurts the CIA.

WHOLEY: But now, when you say you and I will never know, and that echoes a thought that President Kennedy had that -- how did he say it? Their failures will be trumpeted and their successes unheralded. I think that was pretty much the quote.

Who's supposed to evaluate how good the CIA is? I mean somebody's got to evaluate it.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Ah-ha. Now you've hit one of the main themes in my book, Secrecy and Democracy, and that's we do have to have a balance between the necessary secrecy of intelligence and the traditional openness of our democratic society.

So, you and I can't know all those secrets because they'll never be kept if the whole public knows them.

WHOLEY: Well, I'll keep them. I don't know about you.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I'm not very reliable, but all right.

WHOLEY: Okay.

ADMIRAL TURNER: So what we did in 1976 to 1980 was we created a system of substitutes or surrogates for you and me, as the public, to oversee and check on intelligence. Those are the Intelligence Committees of the Congress. They can evaluate Mr. Casey because they have access to the information and can tell whether he really is doing a good job or not. They can't really tell us why they would come to one evaluation or another.

WHOLEY: So we just have to trust them?

ADMIRAL TURNER: We've got to trust them because we can't know all those secrets, or we won't have any good intelligence.

WHOLEY: Hey, I wanted to ask you this: Do you think this $1.5 trillion military buildup and all this nuclear weaponry, do you think that's all necessary, or do we have enough?

ADMIRAL TURNER: We have more than enough nuclear weaponry. We do not have enough conventional weaponry of the right kinds.

WHOLEY: So, are you afraid there could be a nuclear

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war?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, I'm not concerned about a nuclear war.

WHOLEY: You're not.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because the Soviet Union could never come to the conclusion in the foreseeable future that by starting a nuclear war with the United States they would come out better off. The dangers to them of our ability to retaliate, no matter what they do to us, are too great.

For instance...

WHOLEY: How about some of these other, smaller countries that have it? Aren't those the ones we should worry about?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, we don't have any other countries that I know of today, like Libya, who have weapons and who are crazy enough...

WHOLEY: Or Israel or Leban -- India, or those countries.

ADMIRAL TURNER: India does not have a weapon today, to the best of our knowledge.

WHOLEY: Does France have it?

ADMIRAL TURNER: France has. I don't think we are concerned about the French attacking us.

WHOLEY: Indeed.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I hope not, anyway.

WHOLEY: You never can tell.

Top three recommendations for reorganizing the CIA, or the intelligence of the United States. Real quick.

ADMIRAL TURNER: To make sure everybody understands the importance of the oversight process that we've got. To separate the job of running those 12 intelligence agencies and running the CIA. And to strengthen the role of the Director of Central Intelligence over those other 12 agencies.

WHOLEY: Do you miss the action?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes, I do. But I don't miss the

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pressure.

WHOLEY: That sounds right.

Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition, Stansfield Turner.

We thank you, Admiral, for being with us tonight.

How long do you think this hostage business could go on?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It could go on for a long time, though I'm personally hopeful. I think the ingredients are there for a solution, and it could come out sooner rather than later. But one never knows in this complex a situation.

WHOLEY: When you say the ingredients are there, what do you mean?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think that there are negotiations going on behind the scenes. And the fact that we have moved into a negotiating stage this soon, the fact that the hostages are off the airplane, the fact that the chief negotiator on the other side is a man who has some sense of responsibility, a lot more than those fanatics who took the airplane, are all good signs.

WHOLEY: Okay.

Thank you, Admiral.

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